

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A smoke-permeable, moisture-resistant, tubular, biaxially oriented food casing, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ said casing comprising a mixture of at least one aliphatic (co-)polyamide and at least one water-soluble synthetic polymer, ~~and in that the water vapor transmission rate of the casing is ranging from 40 to 200 g/m²·d.~~
2. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the aliphatic (co-)polyamide is poly(ϵ -caprolactam), poly(hexamethylene adipamide), ~~the copolyamide is a copolymer of~~ ϵ -caprolactam and ω -laurolactam ~~[[(=) nylon 6/12 []]], nylon 6/66, a polyetheramide, polyesteramide, polyetheresteramide, or polyamidourethane.~~
3. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2, characterized in that~~ wherein the content of the aliphatic (co-)polyamide is 50 to 94% by weight, ~~preferably 55 to 90% by weight [,] particularly preferably 60 to 85% by weight [,] in each case based on the total weight of the mixture.~~
4. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim [s] 1 to 3,~~ ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the water-soluble, synthetic, organic polymer is preferably (i) a partially or completely saponified poly(vinyl alcohol), (ii) a copolymer having vinyl alcohol units, (iii) a poly(alkylene glycol), (iv) a copolymer having alkylene glycol units, (v) a polyvinylpyrrolidone, (vi) a copolymer having vinylpyrrolidone units and units of at least one α,β -olefinically unsaturated monomer, (vii) a homopolymer of [,] or a copolymer having [,] units of N-vinylalkylamides and/or (viii) a (co-)polymer of or polymer having units of α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acids or α,β -unsaturated carboxamides.

5. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 to [[4]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the content of the at least one synthetic, water-soluble polymer is 3 to 50% by weight, ~~preferably 10 to 40% by weight~~[[,]] ~~particularly preferably 15 to 30% by weight~~[[,]] based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

6. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 to 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the mixture comprises at least one additive which influences the optics, haptics, the moisture storage capacity or the peeling behavior.

7. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the at least one additive is a polysaccharide, an inorganic filler or a color pigment.

8. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the additive is inorganic filler ~~consists~~ consisting of quartz powder, titanium dioxide, calcium carbonate, talcum, mica or another aluminosilicate, ~~consists of~~ glass staple fibers, other mineral fibers or microglass beads.

9. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 6 ~~or 7~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the content of the at least one additive is 0 to 25% by weight, ~~preferably 1 to 20% by weight~~[[,]] ~~particularly preferably 2 to 8% by weight~~[[,]] ~~in each case~~ based on the total weight of the mixture.

10. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the additive is a polysaccharide is selected from starch, cellulose, an exo-polysaccharide or a polysaccharide derivative.

11. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 to 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the mixture comprises a plasticizing aid[[,]] preferably selected

from one or more of glycerol, mono- and diglycol, trimethylolpropane, a mono-, di- or triester of glycerol with carboxylic acids, formamide, acetamide, N,N-dimethylformamide or N,N-dimethylacetamide.

12. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 to 11, ~~characterized in that it~~ wherein said food casing is tubular and seamless.

13. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 12, ~~characterized in that it~~ wherein said food casing is bent into a ring shape.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 to 13, ~~characterized in that~~ said method comprising

(i) heat plasticizing a mixture which comprises at least one aliphatic (co-)polyamide and at least one water-soluble synthetic polymer ~~is heat plasticized and~~ ,

(ii) ~~extruded~~ extruding the heat plasticized mixture through a ring die to form a primary tube ,

(iii) cooling ~~and in that~~ the primary tube ~~is cooled~~,

(iv) ~~then heated~~ heating the cooled tube to a temperature required for stretching and

(v) ~~then biaxially stretched~~ stretching the heated tube to form the food casing.

15. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ further comprising heat setting the casing after stretching ~~is heat set~~.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ further comprising forming the tubular casing ~~is then formed~~ into a ring[[.]] ~~so that it takes on a ring or spiral shape~~.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~The use of~~ An artificial sausage casing comprising a ~~the~~ food casing as claimed in ~~one or more claim[[s]] 1 to 13 as artificial sausage casing[[,]]~~ preferably as casing for smokeable scalded emulsion sausage.

18. (New) The food casing as claimed in claim 3, wherein the content of the aliphatic (co-)polyamide is 55 to 90% by weight, based on the total weight of the mixture.

19. (New) The food casing as claimed in claim 5, wherein the content of the at least one synthetic, water-soluble polymer is 10 to 40% by weight, based on the total weight of the thermoplastic mixture.

20. (New) The food casing as claimed in claim 9, wherein the content of the at least one additive is 1 to 20% by weight, based on the total weight of the mixture.